

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 02819 180854Z
ACTION EUR-12

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SECDEF FOR OASD/ISA, OASD/PA AND CSAF/O1

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: UK, NATO, MPOL, MILI
SUBJECT: RAF GREENHAM COMMON

1. THE 18 FEBRUARY ISSUE OF THE ECONOMIST GIVES SYMPATHETIC TREATMENT (PAGE 25) TO THE PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING OUR CASE FOR REACTIVATION OF RAF GREENHAM COMMON. THE ARTICLE ENDS BY SUGGESTING, HOWEVER, THAT SINCE GREENHAM COMMON MAY NOT BE SUITABLE, POLITICALLY, THE U.S. SHOULD CONSIDER AN ALTERNATIVE SITE AND SUGGESTS RAF FAIRFORD IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE. FAIRFORD WAS USED FOR CONCORDE TESTING. THIS POINT HAS NOW ALSO EMERGED IN A NUMBER OF PRESS ARTICLES.

2. COMMENT: THE SUGGESTION ABOUT RAF FAIRFORD PROBABLY HAS SOME FORCE BEHIND IT. ANDERSON, DUS/PMS, TOLD POL/MIL ATTACHE LAST WEEK THAT FAIRFORD WAS BEING "LOOSELY CONSIDERED" AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL -- ALTHOUGH CONFIDENTIAL

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IT WOULD NOT BE PUT TO US UNLESS THE PRICE TO OVERCOME THE OBSTACLES TO GREENHAM COMMON BECAME TOO HIGH TO PAY. WELLBELOVED, PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY FOR THE RAF, ALSO MADE THIS POINT IN A DISCUSSION WITH AIRA. IT IS TOO EARLY YET TO ASSESS WHETHER THE MOD CAN CARRY GREENHAM COMMON THROUGH SUCCESSFULLY. SINCE THE FAIRFORD SIGNALS HAVE BEEN MADE AT A FAIRLY HIGH LEVEL,

THEY UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE SUBSTANCE BEHIND THEM; HENCE WE
SHOULD ANTICIPATE THE REAL POSSIBILITY THAT MOD IN DUE
COURSE IS OBLIGED TO FORMALLY RECOMMEND FAIRFORD TO US
AS AN ALTERNATIVE SITE.

STREATOR

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NNN

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